



# The Amache National Historic Site Act (HR 2497)

## Support for the Passage of *Amache National Historic Site Act* (HR 2497) in the U.S. House of Representatives

### **Bob Fuchigami, Amache survivor:**

“Today’s passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act in the U.S. House of Representatives brings me hope and I thank Congressman Neguse for his leadership. I now urge the Senate to pass this bill. The time is not only right; it is long overdue.”

### **Mike Honda, former Member of Congress and Amache survivor:**

“Congressmen Neguse and Buck demonstrated what cooperation looks like on the Hill. The two legislators navigated their subcommittee, committee and the floor engaging both Partys' leadership to place this item on Unanimous Consent. Let’s hope the Senate collaborates in the same manner and sends the bill to the White House: this then will be the expression and realization of the people's will.”

### **Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker, Amache survivor:**

As a former Amachean and as a volunteer for the Amache Field School, I have learned the importance of having Amache as a National Park unit, as it would illustrate the hardships and the perseverance of the incarcerated people. It would also point to the injustice of their being placed there, simply because of their ethnicity, not because of what they had done. Most importantly, it would signify the reasons that further groups, such as Muslims, should not be treated as were the Japanese Americans—there have been hints of this in current times.

### **Ken Kitajima, Amache survivor:**

“As a young boy at Amache, I never thought I’d see an America that cared about my story. Today’s vote moves us closer to making the dream of honoring Amache as a national park a reality. Thanks to Congressman Neguse and House leadership for this big step forward, and I am hopeful the Senate will care as much and do the same.”

### **Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado:**

“The Amache site as a National Park unit highlights the injustices of the internment of Japanese Americans, one of our nation’s darkest chapters. Colorado is home to world-class national parks and adding the Amache site honors those values and our history. I hope the congressional leadership and all members of the House and Senate will join Coloradans and myself in supporting this valuable and honorable initiative.”

### **Derek Okubo, Amache descendant and Executive Director, Agency for Human Rights and Community Partnerships, City and County of Denver:**

“Preserving and protecting the Amache site are essential factors toward our goal of telling a more complete and factual history of Colorado and our nation. In doing so, we will ensure that this stain on our nation’s constitution and past is never repeated. I call on Congress to pass the Amache National Historic Site Act.”

### **Kirsten Leong, Amache descendant:**

“Like many in the Japanese American community, my family did not talk about incarceration, and I didn't even know Amache was part of my family's history until after my grandparents passed and it was too late to ask. Passing the Amache National Historic Site Act will encourage thoughtful dialogue about the widespread intergenerational effects of incarceration that continue to shape the Japanese American experience to this day.”



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**Mitch Homma, Amache descendant:**

“My great-grandparents were from samurai families, college educated, and started churches for the American Baptist in Japan and the U.S.A. Grandfather was a dentist with Hollywood movie stars as patients. None of that mattered—three generations of my family were detained behind barbed wire at Amache because they had Japanese faces and names. Amache is a story we cannot forget—and with today’s House passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act (and hopefully the Senate will soon follow) we have a chance to preserve, honor, and protect it, because it is very much a story that is alive today.”

**Calvin Taro Hada, Amache descendant and President, The Japanese Association of Colorado, dba The Nikkeijin Kai of Colorado:**

“I applaud the House of Representatives and Congressmen Neguse and Buck for passing the Amache National Historic Site Act and I urge the Senate to do the same. This legislation will preserve and memorialize a site that has the power to shed light upon a mistake we must remember, recall the service and sacrifice of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and celebrate the Constitutional vision of Colorado Governor Ralph Carr. All these things are worthy of doing and doing so will make us better American citizens.”

**Dr. Karen Korematsu, Founder and Executive Director, The Fred T. Korematsu Institute:**

“My father, Fred Korematsu, was an American civil rights hero who bravely resisted the Japanese American incarceration during World War II and dedicated his life to protecting the civil liberties of all people. His story resonates today as a critical example of the lifelong impacts of losing one’s fundamental rights and freedoms. Now, more than ever, the lessons of history need to be learned. I commend the House of Representatives, and the leadership of Congressmen Neguse and Buck, for today’s passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act.”

**Ken Tsukada, Amache descendant:**

“Amache should be considered a National Historic Site as well as a WWII memorial to honor the 120,000 individuals who ‘served our country through incarceration.’ My grandfather died there, cousins were born there and all left after “serving” the U.S. in a time of war. When I think of Amache, I am proud of all those who sacrificed their lives with humble dignity and courage beyond anything I have ever had to endure. And, yes, proud that America could recognize its mistakes and provide the opportunity for the descendants to fulfill many of the dreams that were stolen.”

**Former U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell:**

“Today’s passage in the House builds on over 15 years of strong bipartisan support to preserve the Amache site. In 2006, Senators Allard and Salazar supported the designation of the site as a National Historic Landmark; during the Bush Administration, Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton designated the site as an NHL; and in 2019, Senators Gardner and Bennet passed legislation to study the site as a potential new unit. By adding the site to the National Park System, NPS will be able to tell the remarkable stories of courage and sacrifice of Japanese Americans who overcame racial prejudice to serve in the military, promote local agriculture and build businesses and religious institutions. I urge Congress to build on this momentum to move quickly to fully pass this bill in light of the advancing age of Amache survivors and descendants and the importance of telling their stories.”

**John Hopper, Amache Preservation Society and Granada School District:**

“The Amache Preservation Society has always wanted to do what was best for the Japanese American families that had to endure Amache. It is for this reason that we feel that it needs to become a part of the National Park System. For the sake of our country and the future of our children, I urge Congress to pass the Amache National Historic Site Act.”



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**Stacey Shigaya, Program Director, Sakura Foundation:**

“As the daughter of Japanese Americans who were forced into concentration camps during WWII, my family has been witness to racism, injustice, and generational trauma. Today’s passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act in the U.S House of Representatives is critical to accurately defining the past and honoring those who were interned by sharing their experiences, and I urge the Senate to act now. The stories of Amache, Governor Ralph Carr, and many Amache internees who still reside in Colorado are important elements for the growth of our state, country, and generations to come.”

**Tracy Coppola, Colorado Program Manager, National Parks Conservation Association:**

“Today’s historic passage of the bipartisan Amache National Historic Site by the U.S. House of Representatives is an expression of faith in our future. We applaud the leadership of Congressman Neguse and Congressman Buck and the enduring voice of the Amache community. We look forward to Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper championing the companion bill among their colleagues next. As America’s storyteller, what the National Park Service chooses to preserve and the stories it chooses to tell reflects our values as a nation, and Amache challenges us all to act toward a better future where justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are America’s top priority. We urge Congress to keep the momentum going and look forward to swiftly getting this bill through the Senate and to President Biden’s desk.”

**Kevin Bommer, Executive Director, Colorado Municipal League:**

“The Colorado Municipal League Executive Board voted unanimously to support the Amache National Historic Site Act and the amazing collaboration between all of the various groups. Local governments in the region and their outstanding partners have worked hard to secure the national park site designation, so that this important part of our nation’s history is not lost and that future generations may travel to see and learn from that history. The League is grateful to Representatives Neguse and Buck for their leadership and looks forward to a swift Senate passage.

**Scott Levin, Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League Mountain States Region:**

“We applaud today’s House Passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act and urge the Senate to Act now. Our generation and future generations have a moral responsibility to remember the shameful act of forcibly interning Japanese Americans and people of Japanese ancestry on American soil. The creation of a National Historic Site at Amache not only helps us remember, it provides an opportunity to confront our past to help dismantle the lingering xenophobia that allowed for internment and to nurture reconciliation and healing.”

**Rick Wallner, President, Board of Directors, Canyons & Plains of Southeast Colorado Regional Heritage Taskforce:**

“Canyons & Plains supports the Amache National Historic Site Act. We believe the addition of Amache as a unit of the National Park System will be of great benefit to our region. In a struggling area, even pre-pandemic, having another attraction for visitors will only add to the potential for economic development and tourist dollars to help our local economies. But even more important than that, such a designation will ensure that a vital tale is told so that we may not forget both the transgressions and the will to overcome that define the story of America.”

**Jane Daniels, Director of Preservation Programs, Colorado Preservation, Inc.:**

“Colorado Preservation, Inc. wholeheartedly supports the Amache National Historic Site Act and celebrates today’s passage in the U.S. House of Representatives. Nationwide hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have highlighted the need for greater justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the larger historic preservation movement for which the National Park Service plays a key and leading role. Preserving and protecting Amache as part of the National Parks presents a vital opportunity to tell a more complete story of Colorado and our nation, and we urge the U.S. Senate to pass this bill.”



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**Phil Francis, Chair, Coalition to Protect America's National Parks:**

“We applaud the House passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act and urge the Senate to act swiftly. Building on this work is especially important today as our nation seeks to better understand prejudice and to advance racial healing. We strongly support the Amache National Historic Site Act and believe the site's inclusion in our National Park System will help to provide the American public with more opportunities to better understand and appreciate one of the most difficult chapters in our nation's diverse history.”

**Tom Thomas, Ph.D., Sand Creek Massacre Foundation Board of Directors:**

“The history of Colorado mirrors the larger context of the United States to a remarkable degree, and the Amache site is a critical resource that offers an unsparing insight into the gulf that divides the nation's ideals from the implementation of public policies that shredded the promises guaranteed in the Constitution. Along with the nearby Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, the site of Amache reminds us that the American experience has been and remains a work in progress. Today's passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act in the U.S. House, and now urgently needed in the Senate, is a compelling statement that the nation remains committed to coming to terms with its often-contradictory history.”

**Bonnie J. Clark, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, Curator for Archaeology, University of Denver (DU) & Director, DU Amache Project:**

“Amache's location on the High Plains connects the American Heartland to Asian American Pacific Islander history. Even more, Amache connects the citizens of this country, across race and ethnicity, through its legacy—a legacy of conflict and the efforts to forge ties despite it. I strongly applaud today's House passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act to establish Amache as a unit of the National Park System and urge the Senate to act now.”

**Dr. Michelle Magalong, president of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation:**

“We commend the House of Representatives for today's passage as well as Congressman Neguse and Congressman Buck's leadership on this critical and long-awaited initiative to establish the Amache National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System. This bill is a capstone of many years of dedicated efforts by descendants of the Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache during World War II, community groups, preservation partners, governmental agencies, and other stakeholders. In addition to extensive strategic planning and community engagement by the National Park Service with these stakeholders, in the past decade there have been numerous educational and preservation projects spearheaded by community groups, universities, and preservation partners funded by the NPS Japanese American Confinement Sites grants that demonstrate the importance of honoring and preserving this place for future generations.”

**Dr. Dylan Mori, Mile High Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) President:**

“Japanese American incarceration was part of the U.S. government's racist and xenophobic policies throughout history. Today's passage in the House brings us closer to acknowledging this part of our past, we can continue the process of healing and reconciliation. Now we call on the Senate to pass the Amache National Historic Site Act to help ensure that the history of Amache in Colorado is not forgotten.”

**Janet Ito, President of Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans:**

“Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans clearly and strongly supports the Amache National Historic Site Act to preserve the Amache site as a national park, and we applaud today's House passage. We now look to the Senate to act on this timely and very much needed bill as America again suffers from ugly incidents of anti-Asian acts.”





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## **Argie Thrall, Jr. Mayor and Board of Trustees for the Town of Granada:**

“The Town of Granada is pleased the House of Representatives has voted to pass the Amache National Historic Site Act to designate and promote the Amache Internment Camp to a national park. The preservation effort has been vital in honoring its survivors and descendants and we urge the Senate to Act now. The benefits of a national park site designation would have major effects at our local and county level, bringing more tourism to the area which can have a large economic benefit to rural America and increase access to funding for the restoration of the site.”

## **David Leaf, writer/producer/director, Professor at UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music:**

“As a filmmaker with a passion for issues regarding social justice, when I heard the story of Tom Shigekuni, an Amache internee, I knew I had to make a film about him. That documentary, called “To Tell the Truth”, focused on his experience as a pre-teen Japanese American unjustly imprisoned with his family, how he (as a 12-year-old!) challenged the camp authorities and how after the war ended, he devoted his life to always telling the truth, to fighting for those who didn’t have a voice. Remarkably, despite going to “quality” schools, I had never heard of the internment, so making this film was my small contribution to telling a story that has an important place in American history and in America’s future, and why passage of this legislation is so important.

## **Adrian Miller, Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches:**

Today’s passage in the House is an important step towards acknowledging the grave injustice perpetrated towards thousands of people, primarily Japanese Americans, during the World War II era, and we now call on the Senate to take swift action. Too often, such travesties fade from our collective memory, leaving the possibility of terrible things happening again in the future . . . even though the context and the supporting rationale may differ. We must always remind people of what happened at Amache in order to protect everyone’s freedom in the future.”

## **Ann Burroughs, Chair of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium:**

“The Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium commends the House passage of the Amache National Historic Site Act, which reaffirms the National Park Service’s commitment to preserving and interpreting sites that convey difficult chapters in our nation’s history. The Japanese American story illustrates the rich cultural heritage of the nation spanning generations, while the incarceration of over 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry in violation of their civil liberties provides lessons today in learning from history and correcting our mistakes to prevent them from happening again. We look forward to more momentum in Congress on this bill so that we can build upon a legacy of government and community partnerships in protecting Japanese American confinement sites with the designation of Amache National Historic Site.”

## **Baca County Commissioners Glen R. Ausmus, Shiloh Freed, and Rick Butler:**

“Amache becoming a National Park will preserve this historic location for years to come and would enhance tourist development efforts in Southeast Colorado where economic development is needed. Today’s passage in the House of Representatives, and the leadership of Reps. Neguse, Buck, and Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper in designating Amache as a National Park through the Amache National Historic Site Act is greatly appreciated.”